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Enoch and the Book of Coincidences

A Journalist Seeks the Ultimate Truth

**By
Howard Michael Riell**

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Enoch and the Book of Coincidences

INTRODUCTION

I am a journalist. And it was as a journalist – we call them reporters back in Brooklyn – that I approached the events you are about to read about.

This is not the book I set out to write. And in its wake, I and everything I have believed has changed.

Viewed at close range, the events detailed herein dwarf reality. Viewed from afar, they do more. They prove the very existence of God.

That proof comes in the breaching of barriers between two worlds, those of spirit and of the living; with the translation of words and thoughts obtained through Ouija boards and trance channeling into real, day-to-day lives, including my own. This is where the proof lies. Indisputable proof.

How else can one explain the unexplainable?

* A Ouija board message that beats the New York Times to not one but three improbable news stories.

* A psychic I'd never met before repeating, almost verbatim, the uncanny messages that my friends and I had been receiving for months

* A question asked and answered, and brilliantly at that, in a language neither I nor my friends speak.

* A fervent prayer that someone be hastily removed from our lives, followed by his sudden transfer -- less than 48 hours later -- to the other side of the country.

* The discovery that the very name with which I was born is undeniably, amazingly linked to the entities and messages coming across the board.

* That each of these is only a small part of a flood of similar coincidences that begin only after we made contact.

Is what we call coincidence the end product of some vast, incalculable, universal clockwork mechanism that can never be grasped by the mind of man?

Or is it the fingerprint of the hand of God?

I am a journalist, and I say again that it was as a journalist that I approached all of this. My intention in setting it down is not to amaze, not to entertain or frighten, yet I'm sure I will end up doing all three. One thing is certain: By the time you finish this book you will know that I am lying. Or that I am telling the truth. There will be no middle ground, no room for doubt. There cannot be.

Where does my story begin? For now, let's say it began with Andrea, with our falling in love in 1978. For two years we shared as pure and innocent and all-consuming a love as any that has ever

existed. Then it ended, and the pain lasted a very long time. Eventually it led me to look for answers, to make sense of the connection I felt to her. That was my only goal. I would soon realize it was only my starting point.

This is a book about religion, but really only incidentally (if one believes in God, can anything not be about religion?). It is a revelation of truths that man seems to have lost sight of down through the centuries. I have not discovered them. They have discovered me. Yet questions linger. At what point does the occult blend with religion? Where is the boundary between prediction and prophecy? How does one cross from the supernatural into the Biblical?

Faith is the hardest damned thing in the world, and if I'd had to acquire it the same way everyone else does I never would have, and this book would not have been written. I required proof, and I got proof. Few people who have ever lived can say the same, and I consider myself blessed for it. And when I finally had the proof I'd asked for there was no turning back. It was inescapable, as all truth is. As all true faith is.

Now read the book. It is an attempt to both raise and to answer questions the world no longer asks. If I can instill in you some of what exists in me -- the ability to wonder, perhaps even the courage to accept the obvious when it hits you in the head -- then I have done a wonderful thing.

Be forewarned, however, that truth can be hard and unyielding. As a reporter, it's my job to report what I learn — as accurately and as objectively as possible — and let the chips fall where they may. And that is what I have done.

Think of this book as a sort of detective story. Follow along with me as I decipher an obscure trail of clues, connections, hints and coincidences step by step, until they lead me inexorably, ultimately, to the ultimate truth.

I ask only that you judge for yourselves. I say again: When you're finished you will know -- know -- whether or not what you've read is true.

You will know.

Sincerely,
Howard Michael Riell

The word of Hashem came to me saying, Now you, son of man, take yourself one wooden tablet and write upon it, 'For Judah and the Children of Israel, his comrades,' and take another tablet and write upon it, 'For Joseph, the wooden tablet of Ephraim, and all the Children of Israel, his comrades.' And bring close to yourself, one to the other, like a single wooden tablet, and they shall become one in your hand.

Now when the children of your people say to you, 'Will you not tell us what these are to you?' speak to them, "Thus says my Lord Hashem/Elohim: Behold! — I take the wooden tablet of Joseph, which is in Ephraim's hand, and of the tribes of Israel his comrades, and shall place them with it together with the wooden tablet of Judah, and I will make them one wooden tablet, and they shall become one in my hand. And the wooden tablets upon which you will write shall be in your hand, in their sight.'

Then speak to them, 'Thus says my Lord Hashem/Elohim: Behold! — I take the Children of Israel from among the nations to which they went, and I shall gather them from around and I shall bring them to their soil. I shall make them into a single nation in the land upon Israel's hills, and a single king shall be for them all as a king; and they shall no longer be two nations, no longer divided into two kingdoms again. They will no longer be contaminated with their idols and their abhorrent things and with all their rebellious sins; and I shall save them from all their habitations in which they sinned, and I shall purify them, and they shall be for a people unto me, and I will be for a God unto them. My servant David will be king over them, and there will be a single shepherd for all of them; they will go in My ordinances and they will observe My decrees and perform them. They will dwell on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, within which your forefathers dwelt, and they shall dwell upon it — they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David will be prince for them, forever.

I shall seal a covenant of peace with them, an eternal covenant shall it be with them; and I shall emplace them and I shall increase them, and I shall place my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place shall be upon them, and I shall be for a God unto them, and they shall be unto Me for a people. Then the nations shall know that I am Hashem, Who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is among them forever.

Ezekiel 37: 15-28

PREFACE

A pre-emptive pair of caveats: Jesus and other-worldly communication.

The reader should be forewarned that the name Jesus will pop up during the course of this book. There are those in the Jewish world who will stop reading at that point (or more likely, at this point), so let me stress that the Jesus to whom I refer herein is *not* the Jesus of popular Christian belief (virgin birth, walking on water, son of God, resurrection, etc.).

Rather, I refer to the actual person named Yeshua, or Jesus, who apparently lived two millennia ago. As respected historian of the period Hyam Maccoby notes in *The Sacred Executioner* (Thames and Hudson 1982, p. 103), “When we come to examine the historical facts about Jesus, as opposed to the history of the Christian Church, the most probable solution... is that Jesus was a committed adherent of Judaism, who intended no reform of Judaism other than that for which the Pharisee movement was responsible; for Jesus’ alleged Sabbath reforms all turn out, on examination, to be identical with those already instituted by the Pharisees. Historically, Jesus’ mission was neither to be a reformer nor to be the divine savior, but to be a messiah in the Jewish sense of the word, that is, a Davidic king, who would fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament by driving out the foreign invaders, restoring Jewish independence, and inaugurating a worldwide era of peace.”

Nor should references to such an individual surprise Jewish readers. Even the great Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Maimonides, the prolific genius and codifier of the Torah) wrote in his classic *Mishneh Torah* (Hilchot Melachim 11:4) that *God caused Jesus to have such a great influence on mankind so that people would become accustomed to the concept of the coming of the real messiah*. And the immortal Rav Yitzhak Kook even went so far as to call Jesus a man with “awesome personal power and spiritual flow...”

Many Jews will answer that Jesus is referred to in the Talmud as a “villain”. But several scholars state that the identity of the man mentioned therein, Jeshu, is in dispute, and may, in fact, not be the Jesus to which we all refer. As Nathan Lopes Cardozo writes in his *Thoughts to Ponder: Daring Observations About the Jewish Tradition* (Urim Publications, 2002, p. 174):

“It is extremely difficult to know... whether the stories and observations about Jeshu in the Talmud actually refer to the Jeshu of the New Testament. Several dates do not correspond, and many other discrepancies manifest themselves.

“Scholars have made the important observation that there is also a great discrepancy between the picture which emerges from Jeshu from the actual text of the NT and the one developed by the Church. Even in the NT itself, there are several readings which appear to be inconsistent, possibly because of later interpolations. The observations in the Talmud may therefore quite well refer to the Jeshu as projected by the Church, and not based upon the image of him painted in the NT... In its need to create a separation between Christianity and Judaism, the Church went out of its way to rewrite the story of Jeshu in such a way that he became a strong opponent of Judaism and, above all, Halacha (Jewish law).”

Cardozo goes further, pointing out (p. 175) that “... several rabbis of world renown fostered a far more positive attitude towards Jeshu than the Talmudic texts seem to indicate. ... a most remarkable and surprising statement is found in the preface to Seder Olam by the famous 18th-century halachic authority Rabbi Yaacov Emden.”

As Rabbi Emden writes: “The founder of Christianity conferred a double blessing upon the world. On the one hand, he strengthened the Torah of Moshe and emphasized that it is eternally binding. On the other hand, he conferred favor upon the gentiles (non-Jews) in removing idolatry from them, imposing upon them stricter moral obligations than are contained in the Torah of Moshe. There are many Christians of high qualities and excellent morals. Would that all Christians would live in conformity with their precepts! They are not enjoined, like the Israelites, to observe the laws of Moshe, nor do they sin if they associate other beings with God in worshiping a triune God. They will receive a reward from God for having propagated a belief in Him among the nations that never heard His name: for He looks into the heart.”

As Maccoby notes in another work, *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (Perennial Library, 1986, p. 37): “Jesus’ claim to be the messiah was not in any way blasphemous in the eyes of the Pharisees or, indeed, of any other Jews, for the title ‘Messiah’ carried no connotations of deity or divinity. The word ‘messiah’ simply means ‘anointed one,’ and it is a title of kingship; every Jewish king of the Davidic dynasty had this title. To claim to be the messiah meant simply to claim the throne of Israel, and while this was a reckless and foolhardy thing to do when the Romans had abolished the Jewish monarchy, it did not constitute any offense in Jewish law. On the contrary, the Jews all lived in hope of the coming of the messiah, who would rescue them from the sufferings of foreign occupation and restore to them their national independence. Anyone who claimed to be the promised messiah (prophesied by the prophets of the Hebrew Bible) who would restore the beloved dynasty of David would be sure of a sympathetic following.”

Adds John Dart succinctly in *The Jesus of Heresy and History* (Harper & Row, 1988, p. 152): “The historical Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah, Son of God or the Son of Man.”

It is of this Jesus -- the real Yeshua ben Yosef, the man who actually lived, not the supernatural myth -- that you will read.

Incredible as it seems, he was part of a process, which you're about to discover, that led directly to my becoming what I am today -- an Orthodox Jew, someone who lives in strict accordance with the Torah of Moses.

Indeed, it is this very process that may, if what we've been told and shown is correct, lead to the end of Christianity as we know it.

As for communicating with those in other worlds, we must begin with the long-held belief that Judaism flat-out prohibits communication with the dead. While it is true that Maimonides counted such communication among the negative mitzvos, the issue is not quite that simple. The great Biblical commentator is extremely specific about what is it the Torah actually forbids. As he writes:

* Negative commandment number eight, Practicing the Sorcery of the Ob: “By this prohibition we are forbidden to practice the sorcery of an ob who, after burning a certain incense and performing a certain ritual, pretends that he hears a voice speaking from under his armpit and answering his questions...”

* Negative commandment number 38, Seeking Information From the Dead: “By this prohibition we are forbidden to seek information from the dead -- (by which is meant) those who are imagined to be dead, though they eat and have sensation — thinking that if one does certain things and dresses in a certain fashion, the dead will come to him in his sleep and answer his questions. The prohibition is contained in His words (exalted by He), ‘There shall not be found among you... one that enquireth of the dead (doresh el ha-metim) on which the Gemara of Sanhedrin says: ‘Doresh el ha-metim means one who starves himself and spends the night in a cemetery, so that the spirit of a demon may rest upon him.’”

Of greater import is the undeniable fact that there is a long tradition in Judaism of communicating with other-worldly messengers, even the dead. It includes some of the greatest Jews who have ever lived, including the great legal scholar and author of *Bet Yosef* and the *Shulchan Aruch* Rabbi Yosef Caro, the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and many others.

Jews talk to the dead routinely. At a funeral, it is a custom to ask the deceased, whose soul is said to be present, to forgive any and all trespasses against them during his life. Later, when visitors arrive at the house of mourning where the family is sitting shiva, they recite a phrase of comfort as they leave. But the phrase is in the plural, and must be recited as is even if there is only one mourner. As one rabbi,

an expert halachist, explained it, that is because we are also addressing the deceased.

We also have a long history of communication with those in other worlds. As noted in *The Schocken Book of Jewish Mystical Testimonies*, compiled and with commentary by Louis Jacobs (copyright Keter Publishing Houses, Jerusalem, 1976; published in the U.S. by Schocken Books, 1977):

* The Talmud (Berakhot 18b) refers to a saint, or 'chasisd,' who remained in the cemetery on New Year's Eve and there learned the decrees in heaven to be issued during the coming year. As the Talmud itself relates, "... a certain pious man... went and passed the night in the cemetery, and he heard two spirits conversing with one another... The next year he went again and passed the night in the cemetery, and he heard the two spirits conversing with one another... The next year the man went again and spent the night in the cemetery and heard those conversing together..."

The same page also relates the following about a man named Ze'iri who "deposited some money with his landlady, and while he was away visiting Rab she died. So he went after her to the cemetery and said to her, 'Where is my money?'..."

Another story: "The father of Samuel had some money belonging to orphans deposited with him. When he died, Samuel was not with him and they called him 'the son who consumes the money of orphans.' So he went after his father to the cemetery and said to them (the dead), 'I am looking for Abba.' They said to him, 'There are many Abbas here...'"

* Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the great book of Jewish law, *Shulcan Orach*, authored another book, *Maggid Mesharim*, in which he relates years of messages brought to him by an angelic messenger, or maggid. The maggid, he wrote, was the personalification of the shekhina, God's presence.

* Jacob of Marvege sought to obtain replies from Heaven through fasting, the theurgic use of divine names and prayer. Write Jacobs: 'It is clear... that Jacob of Marvege did not simply wait for a dream to come to him but 'submitted' the question to heaven...'

* Abraham ben Isaac of Granada, author of *Berit Menuchah*, received the mysteries contained in it either "from master to disciple," in the words of Moses Cordovero, "or else they were imparted by an angel..."

* Rabbi Lapidot Askenazi lived in Safed in Israel. His art, writes Rabbi Chaim Vital and recorded by Jacobs, "was based on the fact that the soul of a living person or one dead, even from ancient times, would come to him and tell him all he wished to know."

* Rachel, the sister of Rabbi Judah Mishan, was "wont to see visions, demons, spirits, and angels," writes Vital, according to Jacobs, "and she has been accurate in most of her statements from the time she was a little girl until now that she has grown to womanhood."

* Rabbi Vital himself relates an incident in which he fell into a trance and had a vision of his departed master, who spoke to him on more than one occasion. He also talks about prostrating himself on the grave of Abaye, and heard a voice telling him, "Retract! Retract!" and other things.

* Like Yosef Caro, the holy Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzatto, author of the ethical treatise *Mesillat Yesharim*, was also visited by a heavenly messenger, or messenger. Luzzatto apparently specifically summoned those "famous personages" in the next world who would come and speak with him.

* The founder of Hasidism, the holy Ba'al Shem Tov, reportedly traveled to heaven to speak with divine beings, especially concerning the time of the coming of the messiah — inquiries that Jewish tradition holds one ought not to make.

* Rabbi Isaac Eizik, in his *Secret Diary*, recounts that in 1846, the 24th of Chesvan, he encountered his departed friend, the Chasid Joshua of Brody, and asked him, 'Tell me, dear brother, whence come you?' 'From the world on high,' he replied." A year later, on the 18th of Adar, Rabbi Eizik "saw many souls who criticized my book, *Ozar ha-Chaim*... they ordered me to desist from writing any more and from revealing such secrets..." Three years later, he communicated with Elimelech of Lyzhansk.

* As noted in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 6, page 120: "An apparently acceptable method... invoked the dead through the use of angelic names: 'Stand before the grave and recite the names of the angels of the fifth camp of the first firmament, and hold in your hand a mixture of oil and honey in a new glass bowl, and say, "I conjure you, spirit of the grave, that you accept this offering from my hand and do my bidding; bring me N son of N, who is dead.'"

* Many are the stories of the seventh and final Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who would travel for years to the tomb of his father in law, the previous rebbe, and carry on conversations.

Perhaps the final word on the subject, and the one to which I can most relate, is found on *Berakhot* 19a: "What is the case of one behaving familiarly with heaven? As we have learnt: Simeon b. Shetah sent to Honi ha-Me'aggel: 'You deserve to be excommunicated and were you not Honi, I would pronounce excommunication against you. But what can I do seeing that you ingratiate yourself with the Omnipresent and He performs your desires, and you are like a son who ingratiates himself with his father and he performs his desires; and to you applies the verse, 'Let thy father and thy mother be glad, and let her that bore thee rejoice.'"

Finally, note that certain recurring phenomena -- feeling energy passing through our bodies, unconnected or incidental words or phrases, the presence of cold spots, or the sense that other presences were around us -- have been omitted for brevity's sake.

Ouija board messages come through without punctuation, of course, so I have taken the liberty throughout of adding it where necessary in order to make the messages more easily readable.

Gaps in channeled messages signify that the words, which more often than not came in barely audible whispers, were either not heard or perhaps simply not spoken. Where the missing word could be logically deduced, I have added it in parentheses.

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begot Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God after he begot Methuselah three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.

Genesis 5:21

For thou shalt be glorified before the Lord's face for all time, since the Lord chose thee, rather than all men on earth, and designated thee writer of all his creation, visible and invisible, and redeemer of the sins of man, and helper of thy household.

The Book of Enoch

Book One

"No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless... its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish."

David Hume, *Of Miracles*

"What if you slept? And what if, in your sleep, you dreamed? And what if, in your dream, you went to heaven, and there plucked a strange and beautiful flower? And what if, when you awoke, you had the flower in your hand?"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In March of 1986 I asked my old friend Maxine to join me at the Pineapple Fitness Center in lower Manhattan for a past-life hypnotic regression class.

An interest in this kind of thing was totally out of character for me. While like most people I'd always had a peripheral interest in the occult and psychic ability and past lives and all that stuff, I had never seriously ventured into it. Maxine had a bit, and she was a good friend, so I asked her along.

Why the sudden interest in past lives? Andrea. I had been thinking about her again in recent weeks, and after seeing flyers about the class had begun wondering whether she and I might not be somehow "tangled together throughout all eternity," as I explained to Maxine.

Our break-up in June of 1980 had thrown me into a deep depression for more than a year and a half. And although it was now a full five years later, and I had matured into a moderately successful, reasonably intelligent, extremely cynical, 28-year-old business reporter with no shortage of female companionship, I still experienced occasional bouts of what I liked to refer to as nostalgic melancholy.

More than 40 people attended the class. After hypnotizing us all, the young woman running it, Joy Ann Juvelis, asked us to close our eyes and take ourselves back to our most recent lifetime. After several minutes all I could see was the inside of my eyelids, but as I started to bemoan the loss of my \$40 the blackness began to clear away, and I started to feel a weariness in my legs, and slowly but surely I was looking down at a pair of booted feet tramping through tall grass. As she told us to step back and view ourselves I seemed to fall back and see a man from behind, a husky gent in a blue suit and long black boots, with thick black hair and a beard. I picked up the name John Clayton.

The scene widened, and I saw that he was walking through a marsh, with low-hanging trees several yards in front of me. I felt -- yes, felt -- that he was calling someone's name, searching frantically for someone.

A moment later I saw a 19th-century-looking blond woman sitting in front of a mirror, fixing her hair. I, as this fellow, came up behind her and embraced her, thanking God that I had gotten her back after all. Then I, as Clayton, was sitting at the edge of a weedy pond, the bright, red sun

just breaking over the horizon. I was thinking that now everything would be all right.

The next second I saw him (me?) as an old man, sitting wrapped in a blanket, on the porch of a white house. It was a sunny day, and on the grass in front of me children, perhaps my grand or even great grandchildren, were playing. I had an overwhelming sense that my mission here in this world was done; there was nothing left to do. I could now move on. I was laying in a cot, against a wall of books. Then I was above my body, rising and looking down at it. It was intensely peaceful. I felt like I had no body. I was going up.

Then the young lady hypnotist asked us all to think of the moral, or lesson, that the life we had just seen had to offer, and before she even finished her sentence a wave of emotion swept over me and tears welled up in my eyes. I knew instantly what that moral of this man's life was. It shouted at me in my head: hold onto what is dear, whether it be a mansion, or property, or family ... or that beautiful blond wife (her name was Annette), that John Clayton had thought he'd lost.

Annette -- a name which, coincidentally, shared its first two letters with that of a blond woman I had loved and lost, Andrea. Was this significant? Was it, in fact, the link I had come searching for? Or was I simply reaching?

It was this that, weeks later, spurred me to call a psychic named "Margaret," the friend of a girl I was seeing. She was holding classes involving past lives and other occult stuff at her home in neighboring Sheepshead Bay. I called Margaret and asked if Maxine and I could attend a class, and she said yes.

The class was small, and had been meeting for more than a year. Max and I met the group: Michelle, a cheerful, unmarried young nursing student with a beautiful singing voice; Sue, an entertaining but generally disgruntled city worker, divorced; Teresa, a tiny bundle of timid energy who was only now, the others told me, beginning to emerge from her shell; Raymond, a quiet fellow in his mid-thirties who had battled back from cancer, the ladies told me, through sheer faith; Louise, a divorced mother of two; and someone whose privacy I'll respect by calling her "Rosalyn Hern," a divorced mother of two teenaged girls who ran the secretarial staff of a downtown Brooklyn law firm (and who struck me as someone who once had been, or at least should have been, a nun).

Margaret herself was a curious mixture of doting mother, chatty girlfriend and sage mystic, a widow in her early fifties who, coming back from a stroke some months earlier, could automatically switch tracks from who was sleeping with whom in a favorite soap opera to what a spirit guide was (allegedly) whispering in her ear.

The henhouse blather seemed to go on interminably, with Maxine and I exchanging bored glances. It became clear that this ladies club was ill-prepared, and possibly ill-suited, to deal with a down-to-cases

young man who had come to substantiate a pet theory that he was being made an eternal sap by an irresistible young beauty who reveled in breaking his heart throughout the ages.

The class's agenda included chanting, singing, praying, Tarot card reading and the placing of names on a "healing list." The mix threw Max and me a little. We fought back smiles, and waited for the action to begin. There was also the fact that Max and I were the only Jews. Not that either of us were even vaguely religious. But some of the songs and prayers, like Amazing Grace, smacked too much of Christianity, and made me a little uneasy.

I had, on Margaret's instructions, brought an item to be psychometrized -- that is, to be held by the others, who would attempt to pick up on its vibrations and tell me what they saw, heard or felt. I brought, you guessed it, a photo of Andrea. It was Michelle who took the envelope and began to concentrate.

Among the things she told me: "A flame... sentimental feeling ... warm... don't leave me... please release me... good memories that make you sad." I looked at Maxine, who knew what was in the envelope. Neither of us smiled.

The other highlight of the evening came when Margaret began to tell us the names of various spirits who were dropping in to say hello, and delivered messages from her spirit guides. Masters Paul and Solomon. Being a 20th-century man, I began to wonder about the woman's sanity. I left undecided about whether I'd come back the following week.

I did, this time armed with a picture of my late friend Irving Schloss. Irving had passed away in January at the age of 67. Since the time we'd met in 1981 he had become a kind of good friend and mentor. A medic in World War II, Irv had helped liberate the concentration camp at Buchenwald and for many years ran a civilian observation patrol in my community of Brighton Beach along with his wife, Lee. I would visit the Schloss home, which doubled as the patrol's headquarters, nearly every day, beguiled for hours on end with stories about almost anything you could imagine. Irv would reminisce, pontificate, lecture and laugh, and I would sit happily, hour after hour, month after month, soaking it all up.

In a way I was the only one Irv could really open up to. He was a loner who had spent much of his life fighting the corrupt establishment, first as a union organizer, then as a community activist in Brighton, a hotbed of petty small-time politicians. Injured in the war, he had spent years in the V.A. hospital, living in near constant pain. When he died I cried real tears for perhaps the first time since losing Andrea.

Margaret herself took the envelope. "He was a loner," she said. "He wasn't understood by many people. There was a lot to learn from him if you listened. You lifted a lot of loneliness from him. He's at peace now. I'm hearing, 'Don't ask me to come back.' He lost someone at an

early age, and it had an impact on him (that was true: his well-to-do father had left his family alone to starve). There was a lot of disappointment in his life. In some ways he was a lot like you. The two of you had a lot in common. He left a lot unfinished. He wasn't happy with the way some things were going at the end."

Correct again. We were very much alike. He called me the son he'd never had. And if there was one thing that punctuated his life it was, more than anything else, disappointment. A lot was left undone when he died.

By now I was beginning to realize that this stuff may have been for real. Determined to find the truth about Andrea and me, I returned the next week without Maxine, who had lost interest. I missed the next couple of weeks' sessions because I was hesitant about making it a regular thing. When Margaret told me she thought irregular attendance disturbed the class I got angry, and decided not to go back. But there were still questions to be answered, so I did go back. From then on I became a regular.

I could go on and tell you more about Margaret and the class, and the things we did. In the weeks and months that followed I became fascinated by Tarot cards, bought several decks and started doing readings (most of them frighteningly accurate) for anyone who'd hold still long enough. I soon added Chinese *I Ching* to this, and found that the messages of the two almost always matched, which blew my mind. I began to psychometrize objects myself, with startling results.

I could also go into depth about how I became close with Michele, Teresa, Ray, Rosalyn and Louise, and how we started getting together for coffee after class. I played an unusual role in the group: At once I was the younger brother, the wisecracking class clown, and the one among us who asked all the questions and sought connections between things.

I was also the one who questioned everything we got — my friends took to calling me *Doubting Thomas* — and got impatient when chatter took away from work. Maxine had not returned, and I took a special liking to Sue and Teresa. Michele was somewhat distant at first, surprising in retrospect. Raymond was quiet, but Louise was a lot of fun. Margaret loved sexual innuendo. Only Rosalyn seemed unwilling, or unable, to loosen up. But that was okay. She was, well, *too Christian* for my taste anyway, always talking about church and sacraments and novinas and things like that. After a while I got more or less used to it, but it made me feel that perhaps I had fallen in with the wrong people, that I didn't belong.

As I said, I could go on about all this, and it'd be interesting. But that's not what this book is about, and in the larger scheme of things the Tarot and other things served only as teasers to whet my appetite for more and greater mysteries yet to come.

September 5th, 1986

At Michele's house.

We'd been getting together on weekends to do the Ouija board for weeks. Tonight, the board said something especially interesting. Brief, the message was addressed to me.

YOU NEED PRACTICE. MANY NAMES WILL COME TO YOU. MANY BELIEVE IN YOU. JEWISH FAITH. HOWARD, YOU WILL BE ONE WITH US.

I asked about something that had happened when we'd gotten together two nights before (I had been told by Rosalyn that there was an older man watching me). "Was it my friend Irving who was there Wednesday night?"

YES. HERE NOW. SHE KNOWS HE IS. IRVING IS VERY HIGH.

"What does that mean?"

HE IS ELEVATING FAST.

I had no idea what that meant either. I asked if I would ever be able to speak with him on the board.

THINK SO.

"Can you give him a message for me?"

YES.

The thought that Irving might really be listening brought a flood of emotion through me. "Tell him I love him, and I miss him," I said. The response:

FEELS LOVE.

The board asked me if there was a special person in my life, then gave the letter A. "Is it Andrea you're referring to?" I asked.

YES.

"Will I see her again?"

IF U WISH, BUT TRULY THINK ON IT.

"Does she want to see me?"

MAYBE.

"Does she still think of me from time to time?"

YES. DO NOT BE TRAPPED.

"Why, will she try to trap me?"

YES.

I asked silently whether or not she was my soul mate, my partner throughout eternity.

HOWARD, U REALLY KNOW THE ANSWER.

The spirit told me I would soon see her on the streets of Brighton, and that we would have a short talk. I asked if she were still married to the guy she'd dumped me for, her high school teacher.

YES.

"Will she stay married?"

HONEY, U REALLY TAKE THE CAKE.

"Will she stay married to this creep?"

NOT CERTAIN YET.

"Is she thinking of leaving him?"

YES, BUT NOT STRONGLY.

"Will I be a factor in her decision?"

YOU SHOULD STAY AWAY.

"When I see her, will she be alone?"

YES. DON'T GET EXCITED.

All very interesting, except the time when the spirit said I would see Andrea come and went with no sign of her. It was then that I learned an important lesson -- that sometimes the board is wrong.

September 12, 1986

At Michele's.

Rosalyn sat on the couch and instructed me to sit opposite her, and for Michele and Sue to stand at my side. She put her hands on my shoulders. For the first time, the message started to come through Rosalyn herself, not the board.

"You will speak their words. You will become the protector of the board. You will be a guardian if you don't want the band of light to come through."

"The ring of light is coming out of my ears now," she said, then lapsed back into her trance. "It will circle the board. You will not let it through. You will receive our power surge. You will be encased in our covering. We will always watch over you. You are a lead. You are the final link," referring to me. "The chain is complete. She has entwined in you. She will instruct you. Her field has split. She is the keeper. You are her protector. You will gain much knowledge. Do not lose hope. It may take time, may not. You are avid, and it is good. Patience is needed to accept us. Do not despair if fruitless. Never is it without meaning. It will be working in you. You may now face the board to you. Her monks are yours also."

Rosalyn had, from the outset, seen monks around her, whom she sensed were there for protection and guidance. She went back to the board.

DO NOT LET HER GIVE UP THE BOARD. SUE IS CONNECTED TO US. U ARE THE LINE. WE HAVE NOW ATTACHED TO U. U CAN ALSO CALL UPON US. U MAY ASK FOR US. U ARE THE MIDDLE. WE ARE THE SIDE. SHE IS THE OTHER SIDE. IT IS RIGHT THAT YOUR SHIELD IS COMPLETE. DO U ACCEPT US?

"Yes, I do," I said.

DO U WISH TO ACCEPT THIS?

"In the name of love, peace and unity with the group," I said. Then I thought, 'Uh-oh, what had I just agreed to?'

TWO SOLDIERS ON EACH SIDE. THEY ARE THE GUARD. YOUR TIME MUST ALSO BE MEDITATING ALONE. GROUP IS WHOLE, HOWEVER HEED THAT NOT ALWAYS OTHERS PRIVY TO OUR MESSAGE. WHAT IS RIGHT NOW IS IN ITS CORRECT POSITION. FOUR ARE JOINED. FOUR WILL SEEK HIGHER. U ARE WORTHY. U

HAVE BEEN SOUGHT AND HAVE ARRIVED. STRETCH YOUR HANDS TO MEET US. WE HAVE BLESSED YOUR BOARD. ONLY YOUR BOARD FOR THE FOUR. REMEMBER WHAT I TELL U. ONLY THE FOUR. SPECIAL, AND HEED OUR WORDS. REMEMBER, U NEED ONLY SEEK US. MAY NOT BE SEEN, BUT WILL ALWAYS HEAR U. U MUST ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO CALL UPON EACH OTHER. U MUST ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO REACH OUT TO ONE ANOTHER, NO MATTER WHERE, HOW, PLACE. TIME DOES NOT COUNT. DOES NOT MEAN YOUR PLANE ONLY. U ARE LINKED. U ARE ONE.

There was a pause, then the board spelled out something I didn't understand:

YAWEH.

"What does that mean?" I asked as we went into the kitchen for coffee. "I think we've gotten that once or twice before," Michele said. "It's a word that means God."

We started in again a while later. This time we got a spirit named Felipe, whom Michele recognized as her great-grandfather.

MICHELENA IS THE RECEIVER. SHE WILL FEEL MY ANSWERS. I AM GOING TO GUIDE U THROUGH THIS SEGMENT.

Felipe told us he had died after the Civil War. "Felipe, can I ask you a personal question?" I said. YES. I took a breath. "What does it feel like to die?" The others shuddered and looked at me as if I had uttered a profanity. It was indicative of how they felt. After all their experiences on the board they had never asked any serious questions, any that meant anything. I, on the other hand, was burning to know. I wished for nothing more than that the board would respond to my touch too, so I could tap in and explore whenever I chose to. What a tragedy to waste something like this with questions about jobs, money, sports and the weather. Isn't that what radio is for?

I AM NOT GONE YET.

"I mean, what does it feel like to leave this plane?"

TRANSITION IS SMOOTH FOR SOME.

"What does it look like where you are now?"

HAZE.

"Is there color?"

BRIGHTNESS. NOT ALL SEE THIS.

"What path do we take?"

LIGHTS ARE BEING LAID FOR U. U MUST FOLLOW ON FEELINGS NOW. WE WILL LEAD U. HAVE HEART. HAVE A LITTLE WAIT. TOO MUCH IS GIVEN OUT.

"Have any of us known each other in past lives?" asked one of the girls.

TWO.

"Who?"

RH, HR.

Wait a minute, I thought. How about that. RH, HR. Helluva coincidence, isn't it? I kept on asking questions. "Will there be a nuclear war this century?."

CLOSE.

The beginning of the next century?"

YES.

"Will any of us be here when it happens?"

A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY

Great, I thought; and just where will I be?.

September 14, 1986

Alone at my apartment.

I tried the board by myself. Although it had never moved for me, I was starting to get weak YES and NO answers. I asked about Andrea. Through Yeses and Nos I learned that, if I left now, I would see her on the boardwalk a few blocks away; that she was in Brighton Beach because of RC -- which I recognized as her father's initials. His birthday?

YES.

Being the level-headed, mature fellow that I am, I fled madly into the streets on my bicycle, speeding through traffic to the boardwalk, where I waited until night fell. No Andrea. I went home disheartened and looked at the board. Suddenly I became worried. Had I been lied to? If so, then there had been something not nice, possibly even evil, working through my hand. Who the hell had I been talking to, I wondered, and became even more scared. I packed the board up and stuck it way up in the top of my closet. I didn't sleep well that night, wondering if I had invited some evil trickster into my life.

September 23, 1986

Rosalyn and me at my apartment.

We set up the board on the coffee table in front of us, but never got to it. Rosalyn said she felt like she was starting to go off. I sat on a chair facing her and tried to hypnotize myself (I had experimented briefly with it years before). Soon I felt tired and heavy, like a heavy blanket had been placed over me. My eyelids became heavy, too.

Rosalyn said there was someone there. "Someone incredibly powerful. Incredibly holy. Way over any of the other guides we've gotten so far." She said he was saying that I was "blessed," that I was "chosen." Rosalyn saw a ring of light around me, and said the presence was getting stronger.

I began to see a figure -- blurry, but kind of like a man's head and shoulders covered with a shawl. Rosalyn started describing someone similar, an old man with a flowing white beard and a prayer shawl over his head. While I could only make out the vaguest of outlines, she described him in detail: Some sort of hat, maybe a turban, on his head; a flowing robe; a chest plate of gold with different colors, like jewels

inset. She got the sense that he was Jewish. He was carrying something. And there was smoke. So vivid, she said, it was almost like real smoke all around us. He was old and wise, she added, and very, very holy.

She sensed that he didn't want her to touch me, or even to be present. I told her that it made sense: Orthodox Jews always segregate men and women in synagogue. I started to pick up a name ... Ahern, or Alern ... Rosalyn was getting something similar. "Aaron?," I asked. "Yes," she said, but a second later decided "no. No, it's close to that, but different. A-rohn, Haron...?"

"Aharon," I said, seeming to remember from way back in my memory that the Hebrew pronunciation of Aaron was Aharon. "Yes," she said excitedly. "That's it. Very good, Howard!"

I thought of Aaron. I knew he was some big shot in Judaism. Being woefully ignorant of such matters, my mind settled on Charleton Heston and "The Ten Commandments." Aaron.... wasn't that Moses' brother, played by John Carradine? Yes, I realized, I was right. Aaron was Moses' brother. Was this supposed to be him?

Rosalyn sensed he was stern, humorless. She also sensed that part of his dislike of her being there was the fact that she was not Jewish or, I thought, that she was a she. She started to pick up the cross she had placed on the table next to the Ouija board. "Hold on," I said angrily. "I don't care who he is, if he's in my apartment he's going to have to realize that you're both my guests, and that you have as much right to be here as he does, and if he doesn't like that he doesn't have to stay. Put your cross back down and leave it there."

I lodged my foot further in my mouth by doing what I always did, kibbitzing. In hindsight, someone should have kicked me.

The overriding message Rosalyn kept picking up was that I was "chosen," that I was very holy and blessed. That I would bring light to many. Hey, great, I figured. If they say so, fine, I'll go along with it. Inwardly, though, I thought it was crazy. I was totally irreligious. True, I took pride in my Jewish heritage, what little of it I was familiar with, and identified strongly with the Jewish subculture. But the God thing? Nah. No way. No sir.

The next morning I called my best friend, David, a true student of the Bible. I asked him who Aaron, or Aharon, was. I had been correct. He was the brother of Moses, as well as his spokesman when he went before Pharaoh. He also, David said, was Israel's first High Priest. He had domain over all of the Kohanim (Cohens, today), the priestly class among the Hebrews. He was forced, at pain of death, to help the rebellious Hebrews build the Golden Calf while Moses was up on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments. Aharon had lost two of his four sons when they desecrated a holy place and were consumed by God's fire.

I asked what he was supposed to have looked like. Tall, David said, erect, wearing a miter and breastplate covered with 12 colored stones, which lit up with energy when he prayed(!). He also carried an incense sensor, which gave off bilious clouds of smoke(!). When I hung up I felt somehow overcome. Dazed. This was too much. Moses' brother? *In my livingroom?*

I called Rosalyn and told her what David had told me, and she also reacted. Neither of us had known the first thing about Aaron, and certainly not what he looked like. But there it was. Coincidence?

Something else happened that night, after I went to bed. I awoke with a start at 6 a.m. -- not little by little, but just suddenly awake -- coming to just in time to catch the end of a phrase in a voice not my own. "I was a woodworker by profession ..." The words were clear as a bell, but totally out of left field.

September 28, 1986

At Michele's.

I had a tape of a movie called "The Man Who Saw Tomorrow," narrated by Orson Welles, about the life of the prophet Michel De Nostradamus. I had been playing it to death for weeks, and in light of what we'd been getting thought I'd share it with the gang. I was getting a nasty but deserved reputation for single mindedly concentrating on death, destruction and the Apocalypse. I couldn't deny it. I'd also been watching Mad Max movies.

We watched the tape. No sooner did it end then Rosalyn started to sense one of her monks. We got down to business. It had become apparent over our sessions that I was some sort of energy source for Rosalyn. She could pick up clearer images and return more clear-headed when she had hold of my hand. So I sat beside her and took hold.

I could hear her starting to speak, but I was no longer there listening. I was seeing little flecks of light, images that slowly grew clearer and sharper until I realized that it was sunlight filtering through branches. I was in a forest. Moments passed. To the right I sensed a clearing, no, the edge of a cliff, and beyond it bright, bright sunlight. I became aware of a man to my left, coming slowly into view.

He fit the typical Biblical mold; old, with the trademark white hair and long, flowing beard. He was wearing a robe, and holding a staff of some sort. I thought back to Charleton Heston. At the end of the movie Moses, wearing just such a robe and carrying just such a staff, ascends a mountain. Jewish belief (I had, by now, started to do a little research) held that Moses was forbidden to enter the Holy Land, and was called up to the top of Mt. Nebo, where he died. Could this be Moses I was seeing? Was this the mountain on which he died? (As you can see, I was at least going along with it, even if I didn't completely believe that it was real).

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